

# PUBLIC SUBMISSION

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**Docket:** MSHA-2018-0016

Safety Improvement Technologies for Mobile Equipment at Surface Mines, and for Belt Conveyors at Surface and Underground Mines.

**Comment On:** MSHA-2018-0016-0002

Safety Improvement Technologies for Mobile Equipment at Surface Mines, and for Belt Conveyors at Surface and Underground Mines.

**Document:** MSHA-2018-0016-0094

Comment from Jack Sagan, Student at Central College

## Submitter Information

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## General Comment

More than 20 deaths have occurred this year in the mining industry. Metal and nonmetal fatalities are already ahead of last years toll of 12, with 15 deaths. What does that mean to this industry? A quick acknowledgement that the incident occurred, a few tips to prevent it from happening again, and quickly moving on is the routine right now. However, this is not acceptable.

The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) needs a solution. Whether its surface mining or coal mining, the dangers are constant. Poisonous gases, explosions, roofs caving in, or rocks falling from above are all dangers miners face daily. Companies need to take action to improve working conditions and training so fatalities diminish.

In an effort to address these issues, the MSHA held six meetings with stakeholders across the country. The purpose of the meetings was to acquire data and information on mobile equipment and conveyor belts. There is no word on who the stakeholders were, but I feel strongly that the miners should be invited and have a say. The employees who put themselves on the line for their employers day in and day out know the conditions better than anyone else. They understand what parts of the equipment need improving and that input is vital.

If new conveyor belts are needed to improve safety, the administration needs to take action. Companies need to understand that spending money for the benefit of their miners is crucial and is money well spent. Whether its fining companies or possibly shutting them down, the businesses should be held accountable if this isnt occurring. Although this seems obvious, I

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dont believe it is taking place and it needs to. A stoppage of work needs to occur until the information is received and changes are made to benefit workers. The administration needs to see that each workers life is crucially important and realize this information could be pivotal for major breakthroughs for the safety of our miners.

The same goes for the large mobile equipment. On November 3rd, a large haul truck ran over a pickup truck and the 44-year-old driver. Then just eight days later, a 45-year-old technician was run over by another large mobile vehicle in an underground mine. Two people were run over in just an eight day span. Run over! The obvious question is how could these possibly occur? The reports said that inadequate communication could have been present and led to these costly deaths. Also it was stated that drivers need to check on the conditions of the large mobile equipment before moving. The frequency of these actions should bring concern to companies across the country. Obviously, communication is a worry, but its likely the large mobile equipment is a cause for these deaths as well. I think its time for this to be a wake up call for mining companies.

There do appear to be accidents frequently involving human error. I dont want to put all the blame on the administration. Miners become confident in their abilities and forget the deadly opportunities around them leading to some of these fatalities. To prevent this, training needs to be improved and a prompt priority.

The MSHA has made a great decision to request more information about conveyor belts and mobile equipment. Now logical, sensible solutions need to be put together to save lives. Miners lives are being taken for granted and that is not acceptable. Whether work stops for a little while or slows down, the big picture shouldnt be based on production and money. Instead, the top priority should be protecting workers and eliminating all fatalities.